

BY POST AND EMAIL

Montreal, October 19, 2017

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*Subject: Survey for Parties.
Decision RC-8/8 'Enhancing the effectiveness of the Rotterdam Convention'.*

Dear Mr. Payet,

We have become aware of the survey published last month to enhance the effectiveness of the Rotterdam Convention, designed exclusively for Parties, and whose result will be analyzed by the Secretariat. We are also aware that only after this assessment is finished, Observers like the ICA (International Chrysotile Association), will be able to submit their comments, according to decision RC-8/8 ('Enhancing the effectiveness of the Rotterdam Convention') adopted by COP8 last May in Geneva.

The International Chrysotile Association considers that the effectiveness of the Convention is paramount. And given the important role played at this respect by the extensive discussions on the inclusion of chrysotile asbestos in Annex III, allow us to make our contribution at this stage.

Firstly, the International Chrysotile Association welcomes this initiative, as an effort to create a more effective framework for Parties and Observers, that we have also held in a reasonable and well-considered manner in all our previous letters and position documents.

The ICA does not want to wait until March 2018 to participate in the debate, and wants to advance its position by making a contribution to this debate now. Below, and answering to the question raised in the Survey, you will find the priority actions we consider appropriate to enhance the effectiveness of the Rotterdam Convention:

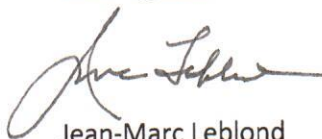
1. To categorically reject any proposal or alternative solution aiming at modifying the decision-taking process of the Convention by eliminating the consensus rule to list chemicals in Annex III, and shaking the core mechanism of the Convention. As, for example, the 'African Amendment' has tried last COP;
2. To increase the transparency, inclusiveness and open dialogue in governing the relationships between the international agencies and Conventions in one side and the Non-State Actors, in the other side;
3. To call for a scientific approach and ensure that guarantees exist for a minimum of quality and balanced approach in the debates: the lack of neutrality of Australia as a lead party in the IWP still is a cause of concern;
4. The inclusion of chrysotile in the PIC list has been discussed and there have been 5 frustrated attempts to list during 11 years, where consensus has not been reached. This means, in legal terms, that no decision of the COP has intervened. Some alternatives should then be proposed, such as freezing the discussion on the inclusion of chrysotile, or any other product for which consensus has not been reached, until new real scientific evidences appear;
5. Regarding asbestos, to recall that international agencies, namely ILO and WHO, have a policy based on the *principle of differentiation* depending on the type of asbestos fiber, the circumstances in the workplace, the way asbestos is used (sprayed forms are prohibited) or the final product made of asbestos. With resolution 60.26, the World Health Assembly requested WHO to carry out a global campaign for the elimination of asbestos-related diseases "...bearing in mind a differentiated approach to regulating its various forms";
6. Before any new proposal to put in the agenda chrysotile or other substance for which no decision to list is reached repeatedly by the COP, the Chemical Review Committee could be called for a scientific review preceded by public consultations. Parties and accredited Observers would then bring up new scientific studies assessing the harmful effects of the substances in human health, and proving that a safe use of this substance is possible;
7. Finally, to call the BRS Secretariat to come back to its neutral role abandoning biased approaches and deceptive initiatives, extensively explained by the International Chrysotile Association in previous letters and position papers.

Lastly, and to ensure that all the possible information in this respect is taken into account, we enclose two documents:

- the last position document created by the International Chrysotile Association for the last COP8 meeting
- the document entitled 'A review of the 2014 WHO publication chrysotile asbestos' released by ICA in 2016

As usual, the International Chrysotile Association is available for any additional information you or your team might need, including a physical meeting in Geneva at your best convenience.

Best regards.



Jean-Marc Leblond
Chairman

Encl: ICA publication: 'Rotterdam Convention COP8 Meeting – 2017'
ICA publication: 'A review of the 2014 WHO publication chrysotile asbestos'

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